

Oral Health Among Rhode Island Adults in 2004

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Center for Health Data and Analysis
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Introduction

Reducing the proportion of older adults who have lost all their natural teeth is a national Healthy People 2010 objective. This report presents 2004 data on edentulism (having lost all teeth due to decay or disease) for Rhode Islanders 65 and older and also presents 2004 data for adults of all ages who lack dental insurance. Data are from Rhode Island's 2004 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).

About the BRFSS: The BRFSS is a telephone survey administered in all 50 states and 4 U.S. territories with funding and specifications from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The BRFSS monitors the prevalence of behavioral health risks that contribute to the leading causes of disease and death among adults 18 and older in the United States. Rhode Island has participated in the BRFSS since 1984.

Rhode Island's BRFSS: From January through December 2004, the Rhode Island BRFSS conducted random-digit dialed telephone interviews with 3,999 RI adults 18 and older. The interviews were conducted by a professional survey firm under contract to the Rhode Island Department of Health.

In this Report: This report presents data on edentulism among persons 65 and older. It includes rates for demographic subgroups as well as for fifteen health indicators by edentulism status. It also presents data about lack of dental insurance for adults 18 and older within demographic subgroups. "Error" bars represent the 95% confidence limits around the estimates, meaning there is a 5% chance the true value is NOT included within the span of the error bar. Error bars that do not overlap indicate a statistically significant difference between subgroups.



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Highlights

- ❖ In 2004 18% of RI adults 65 and older were edentulous (had lost all teeth). Significantly higher rates of edentulism occurred among minority respondents (41%), among those with less than some postsecondary education (25%), among persons with annual household incomes less than \$25,000 (25%), and among those living in rented housing (29%). Edentulism rates decreased with increasing income and education (Fig. 1).
- ❖ Edentulous seniors have elevated rates for several health risks. Almost 3 out of 4 edentulous seniors (73%) are either current or former smokers; 48% have a sedentary life style; and 49% have never had a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy. (Fig. 2)
- ❖ Edentulous seniors fare less well than non-edentulous seniors on quality of life indicators. For instance, 52% have fair or poor health status; 31% reported being physically unhealthy for 14 or more days in the prior month, and 12% reported being mentally unhealthy for 14 or more days in the prior month. (Fig. 2)
- ❖ 30% of Rhode Island adults 18 and older had no dental insurance in 2004 and rates were much higher among those 65 and older (54%) and ages 18- 64 without health insurance (96%). 50% of those with annual household incomes less than \$25,000 lack dental insurance; 39% of those with high school education or less lack dental insurance. Almost half of Hispanics have no dental insurance (47%) (Fig. 3)

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